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a late crop, provided the season is not wet—the difference then is very trifling: for instance, I planted a single potato, cut, on the 11th of June, that weighed one pound, and dug it on the 4th of November, the produce of which was eight stone three pounds, or one hundred and fifteen pounds. I think that a potato planted in June, in a wet season, would produce as much as one planted in March in a dry season. I trust the potato farmers who read this will try my example, and never dig their potatoes, for a general crop, until they are quite dry and withered, which if they do I will insure them success. P. A. G.

"THE POTATO FORK.

"Observing that it is the intention to give a representation of new or improved implements, &c., in the "Farmer's and Gardener's Magazine," I take the liberty of forwarding for that purpose the accompanying sketch of the potato-fork:—

"The flattened portions of each prong is about five inches in length, by one in breadth, thinner at each edge than in the middle, and with spaces of an inch between each prong. They are made of scrap or Swedish iron, (occasionally I make them entirely of steel, in which case they are very light and handy, and wear much longer than when made of iron.) They are made with a prong to go into a handle of about four feet in length, and are found much more convenient for digging potatoes, and also for pointing borders in a garden, than any spade.

J. M.

Farm, Garden, Forest Implement, and Machine Warehouse, 27, Frederick-st., North, Dublin.

"MUSHROOM.

"*By* Mr. Ryan, *Gardener to* Samuel White, *Esq.*

"The following method, which differs in many respects from any other which I have seen published, I find to answer admirably for the growth of that very desirable plant the mushroom:—Towards the middle of October, I empty the melon pits of the old dung, tan, or tree-leaves, reserving any that appears fresh, which I mix with fresh stable dung, and return to the pits, first placing a layer of entirely fresh dung at the bottom. I tread firmly as I proceed. When the pit is quite filled I put on the sashes, tilting them to permit the escape of the steam. In a fortnight or three weeks the dung will have subsided, and neat be sufficiently abated. I then place a layer of a few inches thick of horse droppings, from a stable where the horses are fed on hay and oats only, and which droppings must be well dried previously to being used: this layer is to be tramped, and the spawn in lumps about the size of a goose-egg, are to be placed one lump in each area of six inches, and covered with about three inches of fresh loam from a pasture, and beaten down well with the back of the spade. Dry hay is to be placed upon the surface of the bed, and air admitted in fine weather. The layer of droppings soon becomes a continuous mass of spawn; and the quantity of mushrooms produced throughout the winter and spring is truly astonishing. Water will be required occasionally, particularly as the days begin to get warm in spring. Towards the beginning of May, when the pits are required for other purposes, abundant spawn may be preserved for future operations. This is, I find infinitely superior to spawning the beds at the time of ridging not the melons, or at any subsequent period to their growth; the water required for the melons being too much for the mushrooms.

'NOTICE OF A SUBMARINE FOREST ON THE WEST COAST OF IRELAND.

"This very singular phenomenon occurs on the eastern shore of the island of Aranmore, on the coast of the county of Donegal. It was pointed out to us in 1827 by the boatmen who conveyed us from Rutland to Aranmore. The stumps of the trees are of various lengths, from a few inches to six or eight feet above the bog stratum on which they originally grew. This stratum is now below the surface of the sea; and at high water the whole remains of the forest are from six to twenty feet beneath the surface of the water. When the tide is out, a considerable number of the stumps are dry, and appear to protrude from sand, but this sand is merely a covering which has been superimposed on the bog. The stumps may be observed by a keen eye at an immense depth beneath the water as we approach the main land.

"Submersed forests have been discovered on the eastern coast of England, and in Scotland. Their existence has been variously accounted for, by supposing that the bed of the waters of the ocean maintain a higher level now than they did formerly; or, that owing to some convulsion, the land on which the trees grew subsided. The most satisfactory reason which has been given appears to be, that the bog and the trees which it supported moved, as we know bogs frequently do, from a higher to a lower level—this, from the appearance of the land, appears to have been the case, at least with the submarine forest on the coast of Donegal." E. M.

NOTICES OF THE POTATO.

The potato is a native of America, and was well known to the Indians before the conquest of Mexico or Peru; where it has been found in a wild state above ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. In Hindostan it is still little known. Bishop Heber informs us in his journal, that they soon become so small, that the natives cease to cultivate them.

Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have first introduced the potato into Ireland, about 1586; and two years after it was brought into Flanders, but from whence is not now known. Gerard, an old English botanist, gave it the name of *Solanum Tuberosum*, which name was afterwards adopted by Limacus. In 1683, Sutherland notices it in his *Hortus Medicus Edinburgensis*; from which it is probable that it was cultivated in the gardens in Scotland, though not in the open fields until 1728. About 1600, it was cultivated in England in the gardens of the nobility and gentry, as a rare exotic; and towards the end of 1634, it was first planted in Lancashire in the fields.

In Ireland it is probable they were long in coming into general cultivation by the farmer. In a manuscript in the writer's possession, written between the years 1670, and 1679, which treats largely of the prices of every kind of agricultural produce, potatoes are only once mentioned, and that in 1676, when they were sold at the high rate of 1s. 8d. per bushel. Very old people inform us that few potatoes were formerly used after harvest, except a small quantity preserved as a treat for their *Halloween* supper, which were eaten with butter. It, however, does appear that they were coming into general circulation before their time. In a Dublin Almanac, now before us, for 1706, in the Gardener's Calendar department for November, is marked—"take up your potatoes for winter," a proof that it was deemed a proper season for their preservation.

The following are a few of the many instances of the extraordinary produce of the potato. In 1787, the produce of one potato set in a garden in Lurgan, amounted to seven hundred and seventy-nine, and they weighed upwards of two hundred pounds. In 1810, six men, near Antrim, raised three hundred and sixty bushels of potatoes, out of 3228 square yards of ground; and in 1832, a man at Ballaghty, county of Derry, in the space of eight hours, with two gatherers, raised one hundred and twenty bushels. S. M. S.

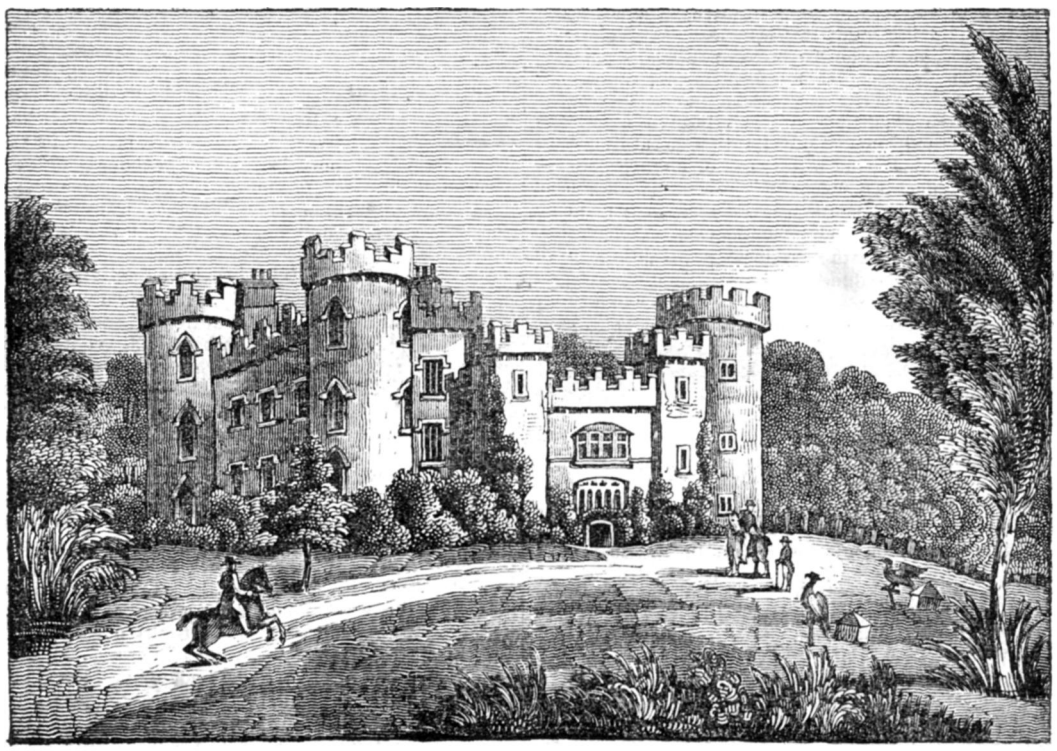
ORNITHOLOGY.

Sir—A friend has directed me to copy his note to you specifying, that there is a bird to be found here, which he believes to be a stranger to the natives of Ireland, although well known to seamen of every nation, and supposed by them to hatch its young under their wings; but they may rest assured they are greatly in error, as he has found them on the rocky, desolate islands on the western coast of the county of Galway, near Slimehead, hatching their eggs; they are about the size of a swallow, their tails

are forked like a swallow; their back is black, with a ring of white near the tail; there is a white spot mixed with orange over the bill, which is black; they are web-footed, of a brownish colour; they lay their eggs under stones on the island, but sometimes on the crevices of rocks, where they are often washed away. Their eggs are about the size of a stare's egg, and speckled like a sparrow's. The bird will continue to sit on the eggs until the person who discovers them is within a few feet; and some of them, sooner than leave their eggs, have suffered themselves to be taken by the hand of the discoverer; but not until they have besmeared the person with a quantity of oil, which they discharge through their nostrils; they will pick at a person's hand when he is taking them. When my friend was lifting one of them off the nest he thought there was no eggs under her; the bird concealed the one she sat on under her right wing. None of the males come near the island, and though there are a great number of females on it, yet there is not one to be seen on the wing, or perched on the clifts; it is only in the breeding season that they are to be seen, which happens between the middle of June, and the middle of August. The bird is well known to seamen as Mother Carey's chicken, but is called by the natives here, Martinoil, from its spouting a quantity of oil at the person that approaches; and they say they exist on a quantity of oil, which they find floating on the surface of the sea, a notion they so firmly believe, that all the naturalists in Europe would not make them think to the contrary; though the only ground they have for such a belief is that they see the bird skimming the surface of the water in search of the oil that is in the offals of the fish, which fishermen throw out of their boats when fishing at the sun fish bank.

T. N. for W. Mac——

Cunnemara.



MALAHIDE CASTLE, COUNTY DUBLIN.

The castle of Malahide, the residence of the ancient family of Talbot, is scarcely surpassed in interest, arising from various sources, by any building in the county of which it forms a distinguished ornament. This structure, as it stood in the early part of the last century, was of contracted dimensions, and although surrounded by a moat, was not castellated. The various additions which now render it an object of considerable magnificence, and a capacious residence, suited to the exercise of a dignified hospitality, were chiefly carried into effect by the late Colonel Talbot, father of the present proprietor. The building, thus enlarged, is an extensive pile, of square proportions, flanked on the principal side by circular towers. A fine Gothic porch or chief entrance, has been constructed under the direction of the present owner of the castle, greatly to the advantage of the building, in regard both to external ornament and the convenience of the interior. The moat is now filled up, and its sloping surface covered with verdant sward. The demesne and gardens are disposed with much correctness of taste, and the former is enriched with some venerable timber and numerous plantations.

The interior of the mansion affords many objects of gratification. The apartment of greatest curiosity is wainscotted throughout with oak, elaborately carved in compartments, representing the history of Adam, and other scriptural subjects, some of which are executed with much skill: the chimney-piece is carved with peculiar beauty —having in the central division figures of the virgin and child. This figure of the virgin is the subject of a marvellous tradition among the rustics of Malahide: they assert that during the civil wars, whilst the castle was in possession of Cromwell and his partizans, the statue indignantly disappeared, but resumed its station after the return of the Talbot family. It is fortunate that some friend of the family removed it at that time beyond the reach of the fanatics. The entire wainscotting is highly varnished, and has acquired a sombre, but striking effect, from a blackness of tint which causes the apartment to appear like a vast cabinet of ebony.

The suite of principal rooms comprises several lofty and handsome apartments, in which, among other embellishments, are some very costly specimens of porcelain; but the most estimable ornaments consist of a collection of portraits and other paintings, which comprises several that are worthy of an attentive examination.

Among these stands unrivalled in attraction, an altar-piece by Albert Durer, divided into three compartments—representing the nativity, adoration, and circumcision.—This picture was purchased by King Charles the Second